CLAIMS

1.   An image creating apparatus, comprising:

an input section that inputs various information;

5   a display section that displays the various
information;

a material data storage section that stores material
data for creating computer graphics;

a text string/material correspondence table in which

10   the material data is associated with a set of material
names for the material data;

a   hierarchical   structural   description   that
describes a feature of the material data in a hierarchical
structure;

15   a search section that, when the feature is input
from the input section, searches for material data
corresponding to the feature using the hierarchical
structural description;

a registration section that stores the searched

20   material data in the material data storage section and
registers the searched material data and a material name
of the material data with the text string/material
correspondence table; and

a text string/CG conversion processing section that,

25   when the material name is input from the input section,
acquires material data corresponding to the material name
using the text string/material correspondence table, and

creates the computer graphics using the acquired material data.

2. The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, when the feature is input, the search section refers to the hierarchical structural description, searches for a feature of a lower hierarchy than the input feature, and searches for material data corresponding to the searched feature of the lower hierarchy.

3. The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, when the feature is input, the search section refers to the hierarchical structural description, searches for a feature of a higher hierarchy than the input feature, and searches for material data corresponding to the searched feature of the higher hierarchy.

4. The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a display control section that displays a list of the searched feature in the display section, wherein, when a feature is selected from the list, the search section searches for material data for the selected feature.

5. The image creating apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the display control section displays a list of

thumbnails of the material data for the feature selected from the list.

6.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 4,
5   wherein the display control section displays a predetermined number of features.

7.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the feature is defined by an attribute and a value
10   of the attribute.

8.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the hierarchical structural description describes
15   the feature related to the material data stored on a network;

the search section searches for the material data stored on the network; and

the registration section registers the material data
20   stored on the network.

9.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the text string/CG conversion processing section,
25   when a text which designates the material name is input to an input screen, refers to the text string/material correspondence table and searches for a material name

with which the input text partially matches; and

the display control section displays a list of the searched material name.

5   10.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the material name is further associated with an expression adjective which indicates an expression;

the text string/CG conversion processing section,

10   when a text which designates the expression adjective is input, searches for the expression adjective with which the input text partially matches; and

the display control section displays the expression adjective.

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11.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the material name is further associated with an expression adverb which indicates an expression;

20   the text string/CG conversion processing section, when a text which designates the expression adverb is input, searches for the expression adverb with which the input text partially matches; and

the display control section displays the expression

25   adverb.

12.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein:

the material data comprises at least one of action data, character data, object data, and set data;

the material name comprises an action name, a character name, an object name, and a set name corresponding to the action data, the character data, the object data, and the set data, respectively; and

the text string/material correspondence table comprises a text string/action correspondence table, a text string/character correspondence table, and a text string/set correspondence table corresponding to the action data, the character data, the object data, and the set data, respectively.

13. The image creating apparatus according to claim 12, wherein:

the action name is associated with the character data; and

the text string/CG conversion processing section searches for the action name corresponding to a selected character data.

14. The image creating apparatus according to claim 12, wherein:

the action data comprises an object; and

the text string/CG conversion processing section, when an object name to indicate an object which the action

data comprises is input, acquires object data corresponding to the input object name and creates the computer graphics using the acquired object data.

5   15.   The image creating apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the text string/CG conversion processing section, when a text which designates an object name to indicate an object which the action name comprises is input, refers to the text string/set correspondence table and searches

10   for the object name with which the input text partially matches.

16.   An image creating method, comprising the steps of:

providing a text string/material correspondence

15   table in which material data for creating computer graphics is associated with a set of material names of the material data;

providing a hierarchical structural description which describes a feature of the material data in a

20   hierarchical structure;

searching for material data corresponding to the feature by using the hierarchical structural description when the feature is input;

storing the searched material data;

25   registering the searched material data and the material name of the searched material data with the text string/material correspondence table;

acquiring material data corresponding to the material name by using the text string/material correspondence table when the material name is input; and

5   creating the computer graphics by using the acquired material data.